1: Cooper E-4 (no date) 1946 SHS Tehuelche 985
Patagonia SH 1

THE PATAGONIAN AND PAMPEAN HUNTERS

By Jose M. Cuevas

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The section of the Pampa which here interests us (map 1, *Figs. 1D, 1E, 1F*; map 2) extends about 600 miles (960 km.) north to south from about a line between Córdoba and the mouth of the La Plata to a line between the Río Colorado and the Río Negro (pl. 3, *bottom, right*; pl. 4, *top, left*), where Patagonia begins, and thence stretches about 1,000 miles (1,600 km.) from north to south to the Strait of Magellan and the isthmus connecting Brunswick Peninsula with the mainland. The Pampa is a low-lying plain, nowhere over 1,000 feet (305 m.) above sea level, except for the Sierra del Tandil and Sierra de la Ventana in southern Buenos Aires Province. Apart from the low coastal belt, Patagonia is mostly a broken tableland, one to five thousand feet above sea level (pls. 1 and 2).

Average temperatures at Buenos Aires, near the northeastern limit of the Pampa, are 48.9° F. in July, the coldest month, and 73.8° in January, the warmest month; at Chosle-Chosl, near the border line between the Pampa and Patagonia, 40.1° and 73.4°; at Santa Cruz, in far southern Patagonia, 35.5° and 50.5° (cf. New York City, 30.6° in January and 73.5° in July). The Pampa is marked by frequent steady-blowing high winds; Patagonia, by still more frequent blustery violent winds from the west and northwest.

The eastern, or Humid Pampa, is, or was, treeless grassland (pl. 3, *top, right, and bottom, left*; pl. 4, *top, right*); the western or Dry Pampa (pl. 3, *top, left*), xerophytic scrub-tree and bush land; most of Patagonia has cover largely like that of the Dry Pampa, but considerable grassland especially in the western part. Along the piedmont and eastern slopes of the Andean Cordillera, flanking the Pampa and Patagonia to the west, is a broken forest belt (pl. 4, *bottom, left and right*), constituting an extension of the Antarctic flora with its beeches and other characteristic trees and shrubs. (For fuller details on environment, cf.: Jones, 1930; Jones, 1942.)

Of the land fauna, the most important from the native standpoint were the guanaco (*Lama glama guanicoe*: Cabrera and Yepes, 1940,

3: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1872
SHS Tehuelche SHS

104 tunity of becoming acquainted with that little-known part of America and its wandering inhabitants.

131 The name Patagonia is here applied to the country extending from the line of the Rio Negro, about latitude 40 deg. south, to the Straits of Magellan; and is bounded on the east by the Atlantic Ocean, and on the west by the Cordillera of the Andes, although the Chilians, for their own purposes, make the Pacific the western limit. The ordinary notion that this great tract is 133 an inhospitable desert of high barren plains and rocky hills is only correct as applying to portions of the coast line and certain isolated districts of the country. The interior presents abundance of watered valleys, and pasture over which roam countless [134] herds of guanaco and innumerable ostriches, by which name the Rhea Darwinii is generally known. And the numerous horses of the wandering tribes never fail to find food and water.

101 The Indians (to use the misnomer handed down from the first Spanish discoverers) inhabiting this country are divided into three distinct races, differing in physique and language, and, in some marked respects, in their modes of life. Besides these the Patagones, or, as the Tehuelches call them, Tzonnecanas, though properly inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego, are sometimes found upon the south-west coasts of the mainland; with these I had no intercourse, and their habits have been described by many other travellers, and they are mentioned in order to avoid unnecessary queries.

The Patagonians are called by themselves Aleuicunka, or Tehenek, but are more usually known as Tehuelche or Tehuel people, a name probably given them by the Araucanians, and by which they are generally designated. These are divided into northern and southern. The northern generally frequent the district extending from the Santa Cruz river to the Rio Negro. And the southern range over the remainder of the country from the Santa Cruz river to the Straits. These two tribes are however much intermixed, and, as in the case of the party of Indians with whom I travelled, are to be met with hunting and roving in company in all parts of the country; they are, however, distinguishable by dialectical differences in accent, and differ slightly in physique, and in the frequent feuds and quarrels they display as much hostility as if they were distinct races.

The second race of natives is usually known as the Pampas or Pouck, whose district lies between the Chupat river and the Rio Negro; these are an offshoot of the Pampas Indians of the plains north of the Rio Negro, having their head-quarters at Las Salinas near Bahia Blanca. They speak a distinct language, somewhat similar to, but not identical with, that of the Araucanos, and are notably different in physique and feature from the Tehuelche.

3: Lothrop E-4,5 (1924-1925) 1928

SH4 Ona SH4

Tehuelche SH5 •

[facing P. 24]

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102
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he ease the soul's distress somewhat until the decreed time comes around. They are so superstitious in this matter that some are persuaded that it is desirable to put a little food and valuables in the grave so that the souls of the deceased may eat and entertain themselves; others think that this is fruitless, believing that the idol will supply them with all that is necessary. This matter is ordered in each [78] family according to the opinion of the imposter witch doctor, who deceives himself and hoodwinks the others as he pleases, no notice being taken of his inconsistencies, even when his thoughts and his commands are seen to be continually at variance. These liars make the others believe that the idol makes signs with its hands, and that it speaks, and then they repeat what they say they have heard the idol say, before the people are present at the time when the witch doctor unwraps the idol, and they see with their own eyes that it is a lie, if the witch doctor says that it has spoken or gesticulated, that is enough for them to believe the thing blindly.

They are of the opinion that nothing they can do can offend the deity they worship in any way, and so they believe that the adversities and punishments which he sends them are not because they have deserved them because of their transgressions, but because the idol just gets it into its head to treat them badly. Thus the graciousness of this power consists in having good horses, health and peace, in finding plentiful game, and in the faithfulness of their neighbors.

The number of Indians who are here settled is about 4,000 persons. They occupy the territory on the coast which has already been indicated. They cannot leave this region because they are hemmed in on the east by the sea, on the north by the Río Negro and the Pampas Indians of Buenos Aires, and on the west and south by the mountain chain which it is impossible to cross owing to its height and because it is covered with snow the year round. So forbidding are these mountains that they are to all intents uninhabited, even by birds.

In all this land there is absolutely no lumber for construction purposes, but there is an abundance of firewood on all hands, good for burning, and the greater part of the ground is covered with sabine, torbisco, thyme and gomieles. All the land is rugged and cut up into hills, gullies and valleys. One of these latter is to be found twenty leagues away from San Julian, and is a very pleasant place which the Indians call Oenna. There are in it innumerable springs with good water. In most of the gullies and valleys springs are to be met with at a distance of one, two, three or four leagues from the shore. It is improbable that these parts